

Extinction with 2MASS: star counts and reddening toward the North America and the Pelican Nebulae

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We propose a general method to map the extinction in dense molecular clouds using 2MASS near-infrared data. It is based on the simultaneous utilization of star count and color analysis. These two techniques provide independent estimations of the extinction and each method reacts differently to foreground star contamination and to star clustering. We take advantage of the specificities of both methods to build a large scale extinction map of the North America-Pelican nebulae complex. With K_s star counts and $H - K_s$ color analysis the visual extinction is mapped up to 35 mag and nine star clusters are identified in the area.

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